

The Daily Tar Heel

Kelly Ryan EDITOR

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Community Responds to Tragedy

The tragic events of Thursday afternoon have had a devastating impact on all members of the Chapel Hill community, students and residents alike. All of us in disbelief have asked ourselves how it could happen in a town like this, right on our doorstep. While some may still find it impossible to comprehend the full impact of the incident, for most the shock and horror is profound and chilling. For the family and friends of Kevin Reichardt and Ralph Walker, the pain and suffering, sadness and emotional turmoil are perhaps unimaginable.

There is nothing in life that can prepare us for such tragedy. No matter how injured we may become to similar events elsewhere, when innocent friends and neighbors are murdered almost in front of our eyes, we cannot even pretend to know how to cope. We just let restraint go and react as emotion dictates.

That is how the community has responded. The genuine display of horror and sense of loss expressed, particularly at the candlelit vigil outside the post office building Friday night, has allowed us all to be candid and open with our

emotions. Tears have flowed freely; mutual support has given all those suffering the strength to handle their own personal devastation.

In the aftermath of the terror of Thursday afternoon, this is perhaps the only positive outcome and the most encouraging in terms of the prospects for recovery. The community has drawn together tightly; neighbors who might not have spoken in a while, hopefully have turned to one another and acknowledged the fragility of human life and the need for solidarity in a time of crisis.

These are the only means that will allow us to heal and recover. Just as the families of Kevin Reichardt and Ralph Walker have come together to care and support, so must each of us do the same for our community. In the short term, we might recognize the bravery and endeavors of UNC student William Leone and police officer Demetris Stephenson. But in the long run, we must continue to give the enormous support so far shown in order to go on coping with the lasting emotional and psychological scars of this tragedy.

End Lyongate

It may not be much of a surprise to anyone, but the Student Congress Finance Committee has made a spectacle of itself — again. Along with the independent auditors, Student Activities Fund Office Director Harold Brubaker has also gone over the financial records of student government's executive branch. As shocking as it may be to Tom Lyon and the finance committee, these records were found, once again, to be in perfect order.

In case this point was not made clear previously, the finance committee's investigation of the executive branch is a pointless waste of time. As the committee plods along with its investigation, apparently without any productive results, it simply underlines the fact that it was created only in retaliation to Shannon Kete's separate investigation of the finance committee in the fall. It is obvious that Lyon is acting as a second-semester senior with nothing to lose and that he has not seriously considered how his own vengeful actions will affect student interests in general.

The finance committee has already been made to waste precious man hours on this investigation when it clearly needs to be working on reviewing bills brought before it for the alloca-

tion of funds to student groups. The finance committee reviewed bills proposed by the Black Student Movement and Peer Leadership Consultants at its Monday night meeting. These bills were not heard by Student Congress, however, because they were not turned in at least 48 hours before the full congress met. According to Student Congress Speaker Monica Cloud, the reason for the committee's tardiness was the work it was doing on its investigation of the executive branch. There is no reason why student groups seeking funds should be penalized because of Tom Lyon's personal vendetta.

The finance committee should quit while it is ahead. Any further time spent on this unneeded review of the executive branch is completely wasteful and should be spent taking care of matters that are important to students other than Lyon, such as funding student groups.

The fact that the committee has been handicapped in doing the job that it is supposed to do in the first place only reiterates the fact that the investigation is ridiculous. The sooner Lyon decides to stop acting like a reprimanded child and start behaving like a responsible adult, the better for everyone.

The New Stealth Disaster

The United States, superpower, global military intimidator, owner of a fleet of the world's most powerful and expensive ... "flying white elephants"?

If the Pentagon, a troop of lobbyists and the military-industrial giant Northrop get their way with legislators, this \$26 billion fleet of stealth bombers could soon be ours. Never mind that each \$570 million plane has scant strategic value because the bombs it was built to deliver have not yet been developed and might never be.

What Northrop failed to explain when quoting the original price on the fleet was that \$570 million buys only a stripped-down version of the plane. The true cost of each plane is in reality closer to \$2 billion, with "spare parts and necessary additional engineering" costs added in.

Northrop's pathetic technological history with U.S. defense is long, but definitely not confidence-inspiring. In 1991, the Air Force decided to make the B-1 the "backbone" of the non-nuclear bombing force, but four years later only half of our 95 B-1s can actually drop nonnuclear

bombs, and those can only drop one type of dumb bomb whose primary guidance system is gravity. In fact, after spending more than \$65 billion on B-1s and B-2s over the past 15 years, the only U.S. bomber that is currently capable of striking with pinpoint weapons is the Eisenhower era B-52.

It is time for our legislators to say no to the Pentagon, and to Northrop. While defense is extremely important, there are more pressing needs this money could be spent to alleviate. The Pentagon needs to first turn its attention to the \$2.6 billion that is needed to prevent national military base and troop cuts in the coming year. These men and women, not a fleet of nearly useless bombers, are the true backbone of our national defense, and our first responsibility is to them, not to an industrial giant who just can't get it right.

In a time when the balanced budget amendment and cuts in welfare are being casually tossed around, even considering this useless defense extravagance is a waste of time and energy.



Photograph of Body Evoked Horror of Shootings

Four days after a gunman walked up Henderson Street and left behind two dead and two injured, the memory of the shooting spree has not begun to dim.

Everyone who saw the scene on the street that day, I feel safe saying, will never forget it. So, when DTH reporters, photographers and editors were determining how to cover the event, we kept that in mind. No one should forget what happened, and everyone should want to do something about it.

Journalists shouldn't make decisions on shock value alone, especially those at The Daily Tar Heel, whose chief mission is not only to be a community newspaper but to teach student-journalists about ethics and making sound decisions. More than 30 readers called, wrote, left messages or stopped by our office Friday to complain about Friday's front-page photograph of the innocent student who had been caught in the gunfire. I understand readers' anger and appreciate the criticism because I and everyone I work with want our beliefs challenged so we can think through the judgments we make.

The more I've thought about the picture, the more I'm certain that we made the right decision, primarily because of the care we took in making it. Deadlines sometimes force editors to make decisions they are unsure about because they don't have time to weigh both sides. But Thursday, because we knew that running that picture could not be taken lightly, we took the time to talk through the coverage every step of the way. The Daily Tar Heel's responsibility is to report the news as it happens and ignore the pressures that come from having to sell newspapers. A community newspaper that relies on subscriptions and rack sales can't afford to run a picture that might offend someone. But the DTH is different and has the freedom to cover an event like Thursday's shooting with the intensity that it swept the community.

No, no one wants to wake up in the morning and see a picture of a person — especially a student — lying dead under a sheet. Equally, no one wants to admit that Thursday's tragedy happened at all. But pretending the shooting didn't happen or sugar-coating it won't help anyone heal.

When it came time to make a decision about which pictures to run in color on the front page, 11 of the 20 editors and staff members working on the coverage participated in the hourlong

decision making. We looked at the spot where the picture would run and talked about that. We contemplated putting the picture on an inside page, running it smaller, running it lower on the page or not running it at all. But running anywhere else at the same size or smaller, we decided, would not have changed our debate: it was either appropriate to run the picture or not.

The photographers called a photojournalism professor for advice. The professor didn't make the decision for us but instead tried to focus the debate on the reasons for running the picture. We tried to put ourselves in the place of all of the different members of our audience who would be looking at the paper: family and friends of the deceased, faculty, staff, town residents and those who didn't know one of the victims was a student.

All of us debated back and forth, looking at all the pictures available to us, some of which were significantly more graphic, others that were too far from the scene to illustrate what had happened. All of the reasons readers gave for not running the picture came up: we shouldn't hit people in the face with an event they're already unhappy about, we should think of the family, we should respect Kevin Reichardt's memory.

None of the staff members arguing for running the picture disagreed with any of these points during the conversation. When we turned the debate around to focus on running the picture, the consensus was that the picture was not too graphic or intrusive despite its obvious impact. Finally, we decided that it was an accurate depiction of the events as they happened.

Ultimately, we came to the conclusion that it was important to run the picture because, tragically, that was what had happened.

The reasons for not running the photograph are compelling. I certainly know that I would have been pained to see a friend or even acquaintance pictured on the front page under a sheet. And perhaps I would not be able to separate my grief from anger at the insensitive media running the picture. The fact is, however, that several



KELLY RYAN
EDITOR

staff members covering the story cried that day. They cried for horrific violence and for the community. I don't believe that any of us could have been entirely objective in our work because it cut too close to home.

The media can be cold and unfeeling. And they certainly can be sensationalistic. But it is not unfeeling and sensationalistic to report on the mood on Henderson Street that day. I, like the other 20 DTH reporters out there for hours, saw what it looked like, felt the anger, the nausea, the disgust. That picture represented what really happened. And instead of being angry at looking at it, let us all be angry that someone like that gunman restricts us from the freedom to choose where we go and what we do every day.

It's frightening and saddening to admit that what happened in downtown Chapel Hill on Thursday was very, very real. Members of the media — including the DTH — can get so caught up in the moment that they forget to really look around them and observe. On Thursday, we were careful not to forget to do that, to take in and feel the sadness around us. That picture conveyed that mood of complete shock. That moment happened, and not running the picture would not have changed that.

Journalists are often criticized for making the news rather than reporting it, for selecting what they think is important rather than letting the audience decide. The press has played its hand in making scandal where there was none, and has often ignored its duty to help society identify and solve problems at all levels.

What happened Thursday is not just a problem for those who are grieving, for those who saw it, for those still having nightmares. The entire community needs to look at the shooting and do something about it so we can all feel safe.

One reader said that only after seeing the photo on the front page of the DTH did she truly realize what had happened the day before. Until seeing that picture, the shootings were abstract in her mind. And when she saw the picture, she was furious — first at the newspaper for running it, then finally at the senseless tragedy.

Let's hope the community can rally around the memory of Thursday's two innocent victims, and also around the safety of every person who calls this town home.

Kelly Ryan is a senior journalism and political science major from Calabasas, Calif.

The State of the Union: Your Personal Horoscope

Last Tuesday, for the first time in decades, the President delivered his State of the Union address to a Congress dominated by Republicans in both houses.

In delivering his lengthy speech, President Clinton (or at least his speech writer) chose his words and topics strategically, carefully avoiding a definite party line. Indeed, while lauding the actions of some past executives, Clinton offered up praise for both Ronald Reagan and Franklin Roosevelt, two names rarely mentioned in the same speech, much less the same breath.

Much like his choice of heroes, Clinton's smorgasbord approach to decision making has left many Americans asking the same question: Whose side is this guy on?

In order to help you, my fellow Americans, and assorted others (sorry Bjorn!), to make sense of what our beloved President said, I have spent a great deal of time and energy compiling a short quiz which will aid you in determining what of Bill is saying to you. No, your eyes do not deceive you: this is your personal message, your political horoscope, from the White House. Read carefully:

1. Why did Clinton have such obviously large bags under his eyes during the speech?

(A) It's not easy being everything to everyone.
(B) He was up late "not inhaling" with Newt and Hillary.
(C) He's decided to start packing some bags early.

2. Why does Bill want to cut gifts from lobbyists so badly?

(A) He actually thinks it will change something.
(B) Congress cuts into his share.
(C) The only free gifts he gets are bullets and stray airplanes.

3. What does Bill mean when he says he wants a "less costly, smaller, meaner, leaner

government"?

(A) That was really just the alcohol talking (he's been hanging around Kennedy again).
(B) Hillary is going on Slimfast.
(C) If he didn't say it, Newt would have. Better.

4. Why does Clinton want to raise the minimum wage?

(A) Because he really, sincerely cares (about appeasing organized labor).
(B) Guess who'll be job hunting in 1997.
(C) If more people have jobs, who needs Democrats.

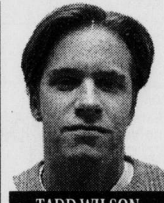
5. Why does Clinton propose to increase military spending by \$25 billion?

(A) Perhaps another humanitarian mission in Somalia.
(B) Who knows how long Jimmy Carter will last.
(C) He needs someone to protect him if he comes back to North Carolina.

Extra Credit: Why didn't Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole smile very much during the speech?

(A) Because he's a Republican, and they're just plain nasty.
(B) Talking about the Brady Bill makes him nervous when he has an AK-47 assault rifle in his brief case and an itchy finger.
(C) Bob never smiles.

Now you can calculate your final score. If you answered (A) four or more times, Bill makes you happy but a little cautious, especially when he talks about free trade and fiscal responsibility. But that's OK, as long as you feel good about yourself. Your heroes are Stalin, Mao and Jocelyn



TADD WILSON
ROLL IT AGAIN,
JAMES

Elders, and you are now qualified to run a desk at the DTH. Park carefully.

If you answered (B) four or more times, you are a cynical, realistic Independent. Bill makes you suspicious, but so does everyone else. You cheer for less taxation, worry about health care and probably don't care too much what else happens. Your heroes are Beavis and Butthead, and you are qualified to watch C-Span all day because real work sucks.

If you answered (C) four or more times, Bill rubs you the wrong way, and 1996 is getting closer every day. Newt makes you happy, even if he is New Day. Overall, you think things are pretty spiffy. Your heroes are Buckley, Rush and Reagan, and you are now qualified to reap huge profits off the backs of the sweating masses and enjoy your capital gains until the proletariat rises to crush you.

If you didn't answer A, B, or C for more than three questions, you are just as confused as most of the nation. Often, it seems like where Bill stands is wherever Bill lands. While President Clinton did make an admirable attempt at rousing bipartisan support, neither the right nor the left can trust him completely as the words keep coming out of both sides of his mouth. President Clinton did take strong positions on issues such as the Brady Bill, free trade and welfare reform, but his actions still beg the question: whose side is he on?

For the present, no one seems to know where Clinton's true loyalties lie. Though he is adept at the game of politics, he should be careful not to try to be all things to all people. By bending over backwards for every interest group and powerful lobby, President Clinton has shown us the amazing resilience and flexibility ... of his spine.

Tadd Wilson is a junior English and political science major who was once propositioned for sex by Billy "Switch-hitter" Clinton.

Time for Congress

Candidates for Student Congress, it's now your turn for editorial attention. Because of the vast number of positions and candidates for congress, we can't conduct in-person endorsement interviews. And because there are

so many candidates, we need extra time to consider all the candidates thoroughly and fairly. To this purpose, we have made endorsement questionnaires for all Student Congress candidates. The questionnaires will be available in The Daily

Tar Heel office in Union Suite 104 beginning today. The completed questionnaires will be due by 5 p.m. Thursday. If you have any questions, call Editorial Page Editor Thanassis Cambanis or Editor Kelly Ryan at 962-0245.

THE DAILY TAR HEEL

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